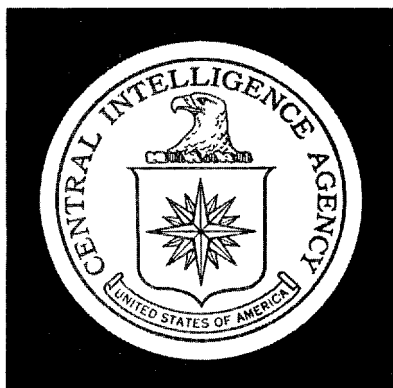


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**Top Secret** *117*



DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

## MEMORANDUM

### *The Situation in Vietnam*

State Department review  
completed

NSA review completed

**Top Secret**

23 December 1966

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Information as of 1600  
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### HIGHLIGHTS

Buddhist monk Tri Quang is reportedly trying to make a political comeback by approaching disparate religious and political groups. He is endeavoring to persuade them to unite in a common policy on issues such as peace and opposition to the government.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam: Contact continues between US Marines and Communist units in the northern province of Thua Thien with more than 175 enemy troops killed since this operation--CHINOOK--began on 19 December (Para. 1). Forty-one Viet Cong were reported killed by ARVN soldiers in two days of fighting in the Mekong Delta province of Vinh Long (Para. 2). The Christmas truce begins at 6 p.m. (EST) 23 December (Para. 3). The weekly review of South Vietnam battle statistics (Para. 4).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam: The Constituent Assembly left several issues unresolved in its 22 December session which approved the principle of an independent judiciary (Paras. 1-3). Tri Quang is reportedly trying to make a political comeback by contacting various religious and political groups on issues of peace and opposition to the government (Para. 4).

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III. Military Developments in North Vietnam: A US destroyer was hit several times by a North Vietnamese shore battery on 23 December (Paras. 1-2). Additional North Korean ground controllers have been detected in North Vietnam (Para. 3).

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IV. Other Communist Military Developments:  
There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: North Vietnam has avoided direct comment on the letter of 19 December from Ambassador Goldberg to U Thant, but Moscow and Peking have attacked it heavily (Paras. 1-5).

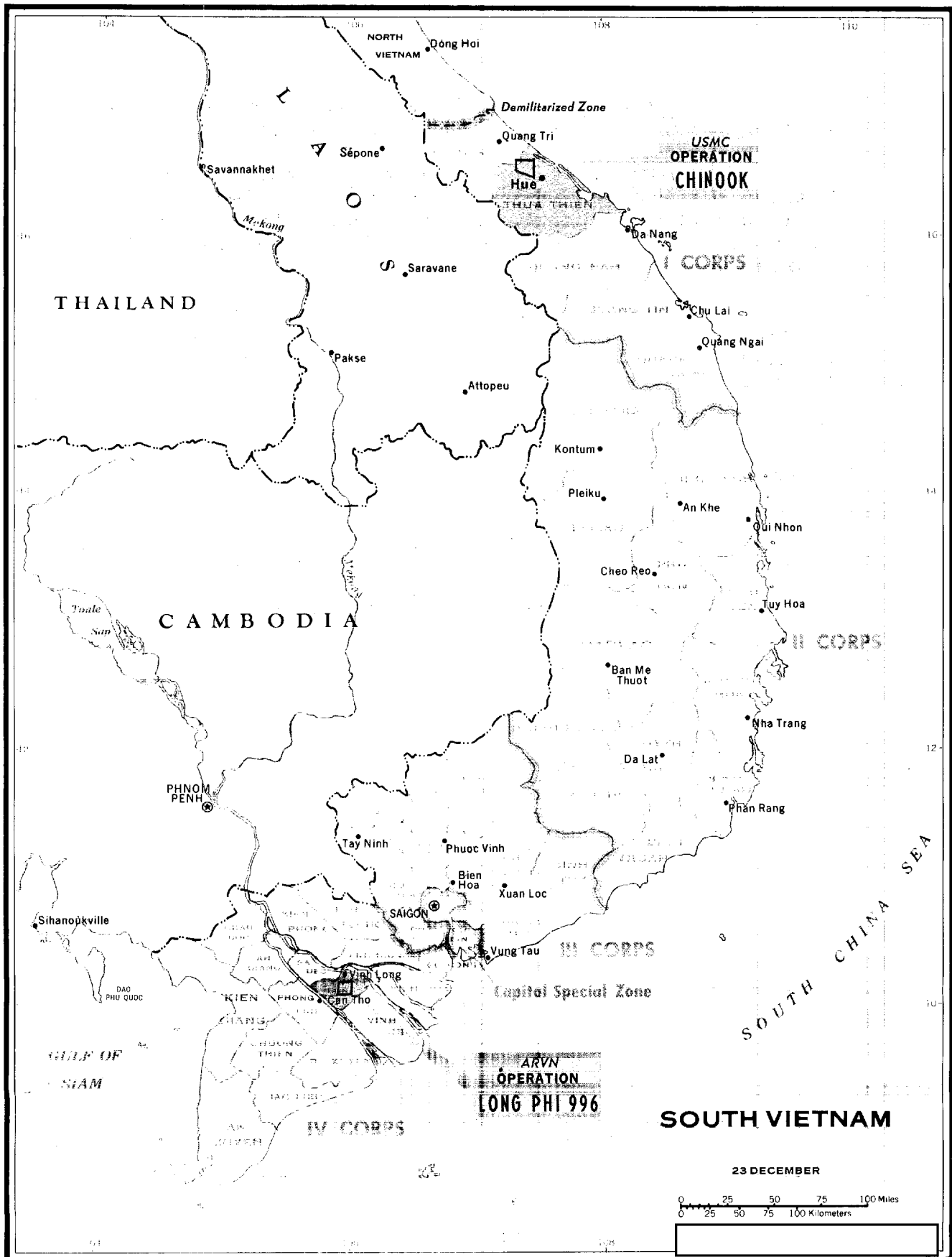
VI. Other Major Aspects: The Soviets have begun to ship prefabricated bridge parts to North Vietnam, according to a Moscow radiobroadcast (Paras. 1-2).

ANNEX:

South Vietnam Battle Statistics  
1963 through the week of 11-17 Dec 1966  
-Weapons and Personnel Losses  
-Viet Cong Attacks and Incidents

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Contact made on 22 December between US Marines and Communist forces about 12 miles northwest of Hue in northern Thua Thien Province continued on 23 December. Supported by allied aircraft and artillery, the marines have pursued the enemy as they have retreated into the hills. This search-and-destroy operation--named CHINOOK--which began on 19 December has resulted in more than 175 enemy soldiers killed. Five prisoners and 41 individual weapons have been seized. American casualties thus far are two killed and 61 wounded.

2. In the Mekong Delta province of Vinh Long, South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) soldiers participating in Operation LONG PHI 996 reported sporadic contact with the Viet Cong on 22 and 23 December. Forty-one enemy soldiers were killed and eight captured in these clashes. ARVN casualties were reported as 19 wounded.

3. The Christmas truce is scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. (EST) 23 December and continue until 6 p.m. (EST) 25 December. Although no allied military offensive operations are scheduled to begin during this period, a full alert will be maintained.

Weekly Review of South Vietnam Battle Statistics

4. The week of 11-17 December compared with 4-10 Dec:

I. Viet Cong Incidents

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>At-tacks</u>	<u>Regimental size</u>	<u>Battalion size</u>
4-10 Dec	24	0	3
11-17 Dec	23	0	0

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<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Company size</u>	<u>Harassment</u>	<u>Terrorism</u>
4-10 Dec	2	306	27
11-17 Dec	6	377	31

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Sabo-tage</u>	<u>Propa-ganda</u>	<u>Anti-Aircraft</u>	<u>Total Incidents</u>
4-10 Dec	23	23	127	530
11-17 Dec	7	23	193	654

## II. Casualties

	<u>VC/NVA</u>		<u>GVN</u>	
	<u>4-10 Dec</u>	<u>11-17 Dec</u>	<u>4-10 Dec</u>	<u>11-17 Dec</u>
Killed	589	825	216	190
Wounded	---	---	383	446
Missing/	235	88	247	34
Captured	---	---	---	---
TOTALS	824	913	846	670

	<u>US</u>		<u>FREE WORLD</u>	
	<u>4-10 Dec</u>	<u>11-17 Dec</u>	<u>4-10 Dec</u>	<u>11-17 Dec</u>
Killed	83	88	9	9
Wounded	559	429	26	15
Missing/	7	2	0	0
Captured	---	---	---	---
TOTALS	649	519	35	24

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III. Weapons Captured

	<u>VC/NVA</u>		<u>GVN</u>	
	<u>4-10 Dec</u>	<u>11-17 Dec</u>	<u>4-10 Dec</u>	<u>11-17 Dec</u>
Individual	221	Not	248	294
Crew-Served	<u>12</u>	Reported	<u>3</u>	<u>13</u>
TOTALS	233		251	307

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## II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. No information is available on activities on 23 December of the Constituent Assembly, which was scheduled to debate the question of an inspectorate branch in the future government before beginning a Christmas recess.

2. According to the US Embassy, the assembly's 22 December session, which approved the principle of an independent judiciary, left several related issues unresolved. The assembly agreed that the judiciary would be headed by a supreme court, and that there could be, subordinate to the court, a high judicial council empowered to nominate judges and act as a regulatory agency. Debate on the issue of whether the supreme court would have the power of judicial review was, however, inconclusive, as was discussion of other issues such as the establishment of minority courts and the status of administrative courts. These matters will be left up to the drafting committee and debated further when the draft constitution is presented for adoption.

3. The embassy also reports that, despite the overwhelming assembly approval on 20 December of the principle of elected province chiefs and mayors, there is widespread private concern among the deputies over this issue. Reservations center chiefly on the feasibility of holding elections under present security conditions, the fear that the Viet Cong might legally gain control of some provinces, and the danger of encouraging regionalism and separatism to the detriment of key central government programs. Moreover, the Ky government is known to be strongly opposed to the election of province chiefs, and at least one official claims that the Directorate's veto power would be applied to kill or modify such a constitutional provision. The embassy believes that future government-assembly dialogue on this question is likely, and that the provision probably will be modified, possibly by substituting a more general principle on the right of local self-government.

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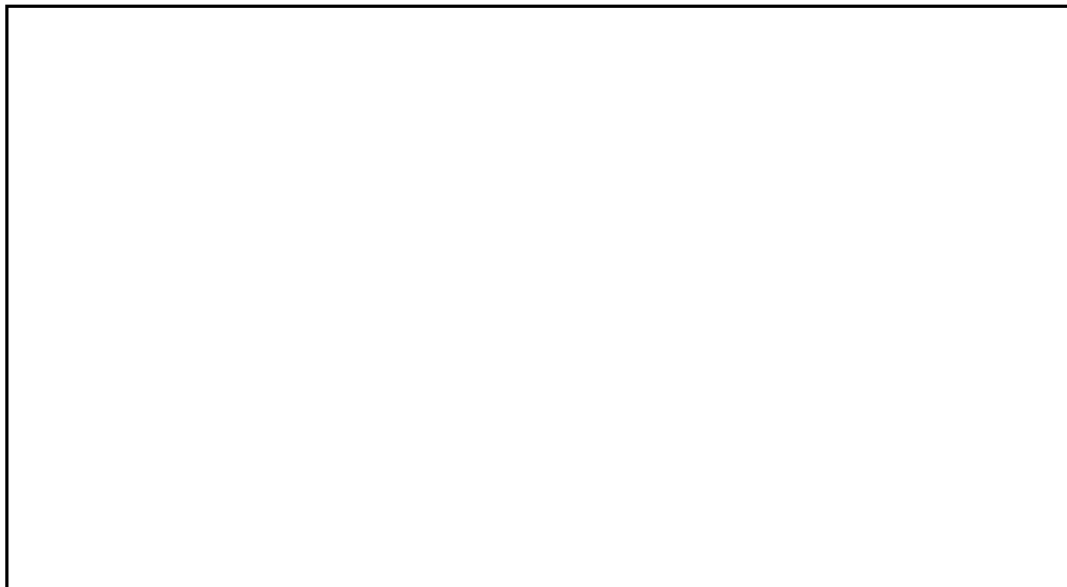
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4. [REDACTED]

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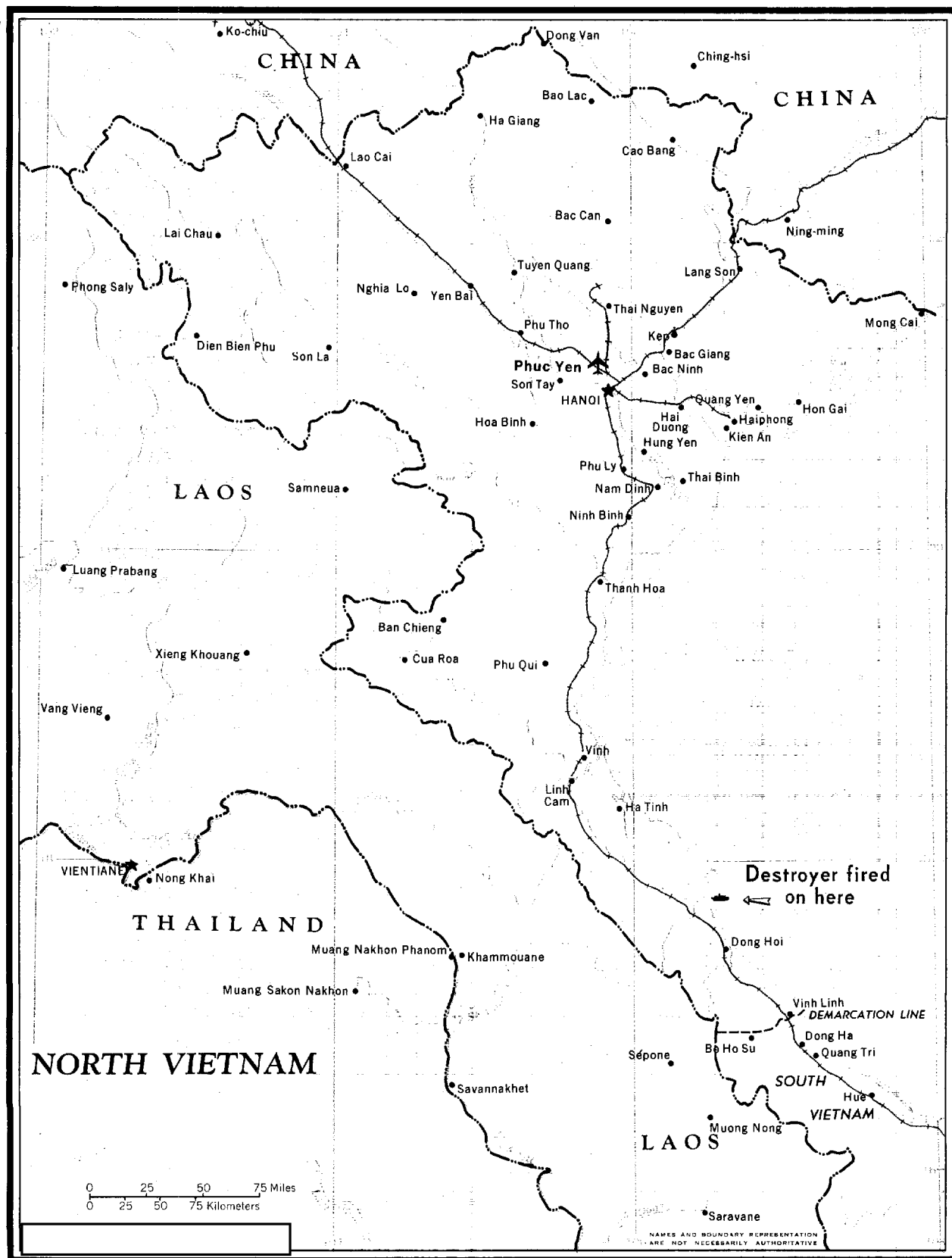
[REDACTED] militant Buddhist monk Tri Quang is trying to make a political comeback by making approaches to disparate religious and political groups toward a common policy on such issues as peace and opposition to the government. He has already approached certain Catholic circles, including the Archbishop of Saigon who was noncommittal, to announce joint support for the Pope's appeal to extend the Christmas truce. Quang's longer-term aim is apparently to forge some sort of central-southern coalition which could contest for power in forthcoming elections. It is unlikely that Tri Quang's maneuvers will gain him any firm allies in view of his presently diminished prestige, and the widespread hostility and suspicion toward him. Certain factors, however, make his tactics potentially troublesome. These include continuing regional and military-civilian frictions, political opportunism as elections approach, and latent concern among some Vietnamese that sudden peace negotiations might find the nationalist forces disunited and unprepared to cope with Viet Cong organization.



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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. The US destroyer O'Brien, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] was fired upon by a North Vietnamese shore battery. The destroyer was hit directly several times and received further damage from some near airbursts as it maneuvered at high speed away from the coast. Two US sailors were killed and four others wounded--one critically and one moderately. The O'Brien is proceeding to a repair facility.

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2. This is the first time that a North Vietnamese shore battery has hit a US ship. The incident occurred about 21 miles north of Dong Hoi and the destroyer was over five miles from the coast. The shore battery was in turn attacked by some ten aircraft from the US carrier Kitty Hawk, as well as by counterfire from the O'Brien. The results of these attacks are unknown.

North Korean Ground Controllers in the DRV

3. Nine native-speaking North Koreans have been detected in communications co-located with their North Vietnamese counterparts at various ground control facilities in the DRV. Most of the Koreans are located at facilities which are associated with Phuc Yen Airfield. These include: the airfield controller, the tower controller, the direction-finding controller, three controllers associated with ground-control-intercept activity, and a mobile ground station, the function of which has not been determined. In addition, native Koreans are co-located with the Vietnamese airfield controllers at Gia Lam and Kep airfields.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. Hanoi has thus far avoided direct comment on the US letter of 19 December to UN Secretary General U Thant. A Nhan Dan editorial of 21 December referred, however, to Ambassador Goldberg as the initiator of "US peace frauds."

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3. Although Hanoi has been relatively cautious in its handling of the US letter to U Thant, Moscow radio continues to deride the US effort. The letter is cited as an attempt to assuage what Moscow termed the universal indignation over recent American bombing of Hanoi and other "grave crimes" committed by the US. It is referred to as just another cover-up for a new step of escalation. Moscow has asserted that the UN has no mandate to interfere in the Vietnam problem. Instead, the Geneva agreements were again mentioned as the legal means for investigating the Vietnam issue and forbidding the illegal American intervention. Moscow radio asserts America is trying to relegate the Geneva agreements to the background by involving the UN in the war.

4. The Yugoslav press reports that the Soviet Foreign Ministry, in answer to a query, has reiterated that the Soviet attitude remains unchanged. The Soviets maintained that as long as the US does not accept the conditions laid down by Hanoi and the Liberation Front, no American initiative may count on a favorable reception by international public opinion.

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5. The Chinese Communists remain as adamantly opposed to Vietnam negotiations now as they were a year ago. Peking's propaganda has been particularly harsh on UN-related peace efforts. China was quick to condemn Ambassador Goldberg's letter of 19 December to U Thant asking for help in arranging peace talks. An authoritative 22 December People's Daily Commentator article called the letter another "farce" of "forcing peace talks through bombing." Peking blasted the "so-called" Christmas truce and "peace talks swindles peddled by the Pope" and U Thant.

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VI. OTHER MAJOR ASPECTS

1. A local Radio Moscow broadcast on 22 December indicated that the Soviets have begun to ship "prefabricated bridge parts" to North Vietnam for quick repair of bombed bridges. The news item probably refers to finished steel bridge girders ready to be bolted together. "Ready-to-build" bridges shipped to North Vietnam in significant quantities would boost an already successful program to maintain and improve lines of communication in the face of US air attacks. During World War II, the US spanned rivers with bridges of this type often in a single day. Hanoi is now relying on cable bridges and light bridges constructed of local materials for repairing damaged spans and building bypass bridges.

2. Prior to the initiation of the US bombing program, Communist China supplied North Vietnam's steel bridge girder needs. Available evidence since the air strikes began indicates that the USSR has replaced China as supplier of this material.

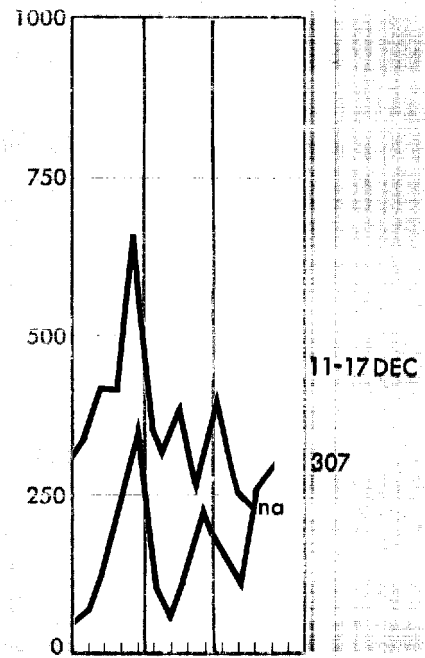
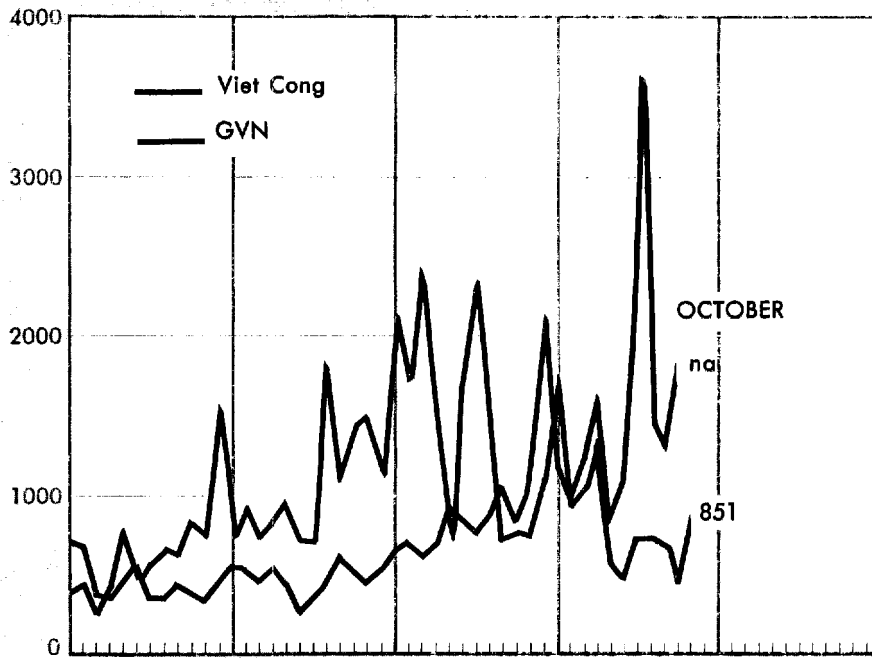
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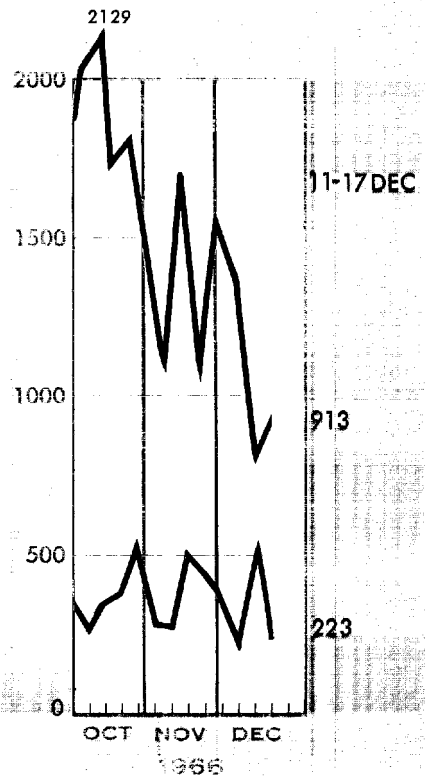
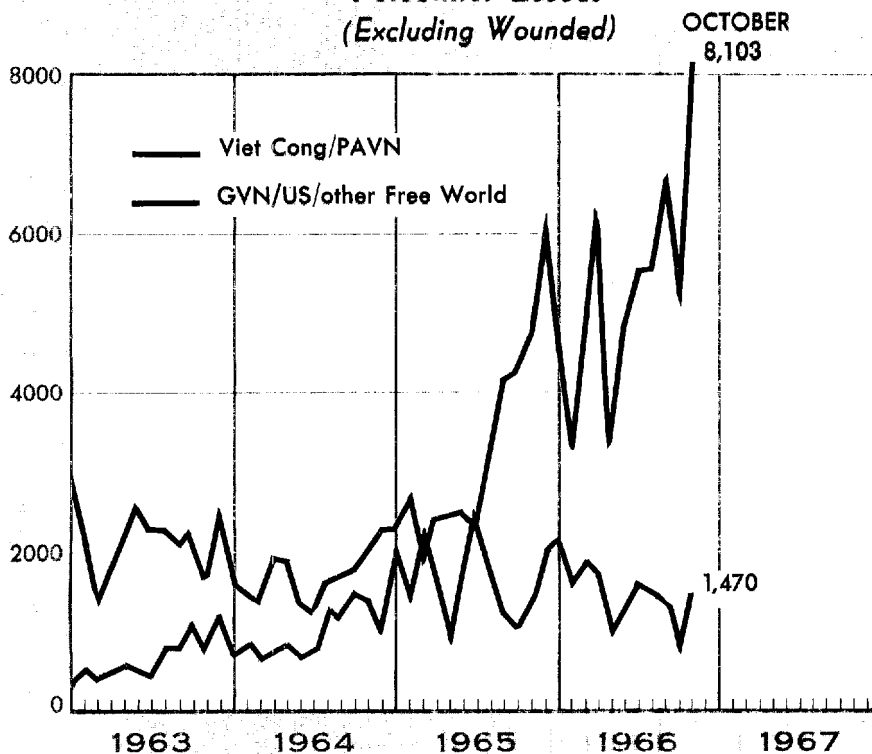


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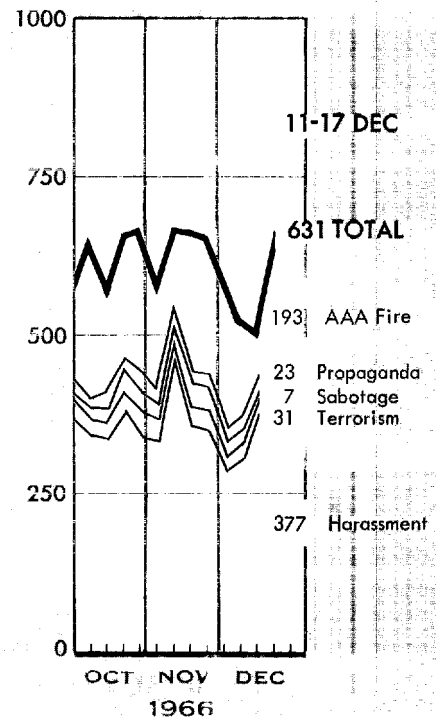
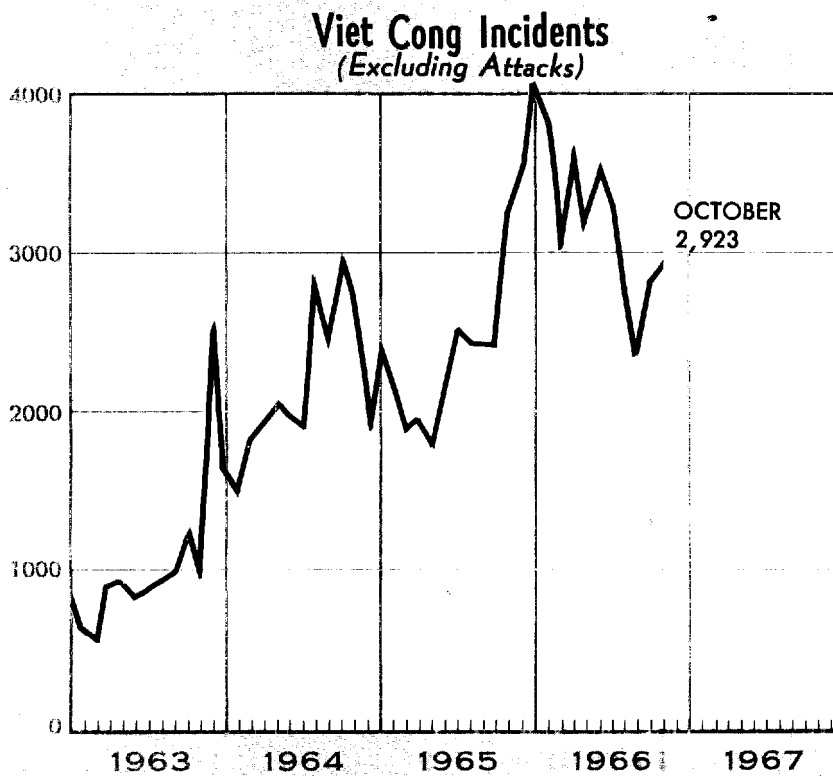
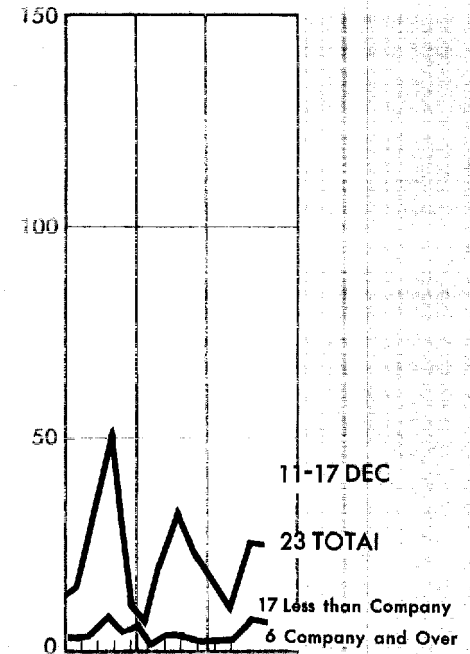
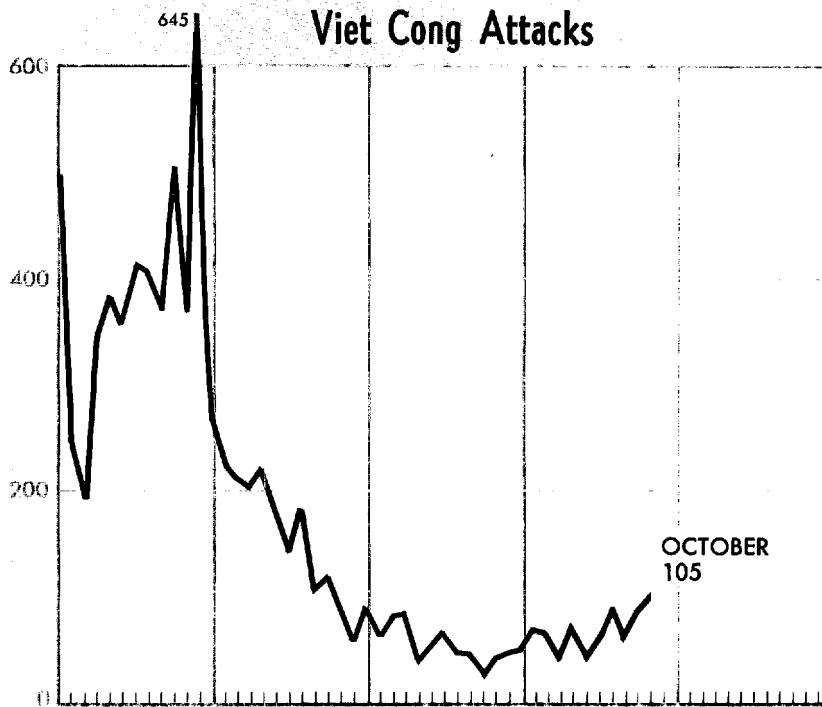
## Weapons Losses



## Personnel Losses (Excluding Wounded)



US Casualties to Date: Killed 6,322 Wounded 36,669 Captured 95 Missing 375



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